

family in this community, I thank Ms. Momberger for her hard work and accomplishments that have pushed our region forward. I also commend her on her achievements as a journalist and community leader, and thank her for bringing important resources and stories from our region into Redlands households each and every day. She leaves behind a legacy of journalistic excellence that will be remembered by all who read and appreciated her work.

TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH (LISA)  
JOYCE FREEMAN ON THE OCCA-  
SION OF HER RETIREMENT AS  
DIRECTOR OF THE VETERANS  
AFFAIRS PALO ALTO HEALTH  
CARE SYSTEM

**HON. ANNA G. ESHOO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 23, 2016*

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Elizabeth (Lisa) Joyce Freeman, the Director of the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System. Appointed to the position on February 11, 2001, we will celebrate her retirement on June 7, 2016.

Lisa is a 1983 graduate of the University of Notre Dame where she earned a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. She received a master's degree in Business Administration from Louisiana Tech University in 1987, and is a licensed civil engineer in the state of Virginia. She and her husband live in the Willows neighborhood of Menlo Park, California.

Lisa Freeman began her VA career in 1983 as a Resident Engineer at the VA Medical Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Later positions include Senior Resident Engineer, Shreveport, Louisiana; Project Manager, Southern Region, VA Central Office; Health Systems Specialist, Southern Region Field Support Office, VA Central Office; Health System Administrator Trainee, VA Palo Alto Health Care System; Chief Operating Officer, VA Sierra Pacific Network Office, San Francisco, California; Associate Director, VA Palo Alto Health Care System; and Acting Director, VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

In addition to her VA responsibilities, Lisa Freeman is a Fellow in the American College of Health Care Executives and serves as a formal mentor to numerous VA emerging leaders. She is a member of the California Hospital Association's Santa Clara County Section and served on the 2006 Board of Directors for the Hospital Council. In 2005, she received the VA Alumni Association's Honorary Leadership Award. She also received a Presidential Rank Award at the Meritorious Level in 2005 and at the Distinguished Level in 2009 and was named one of the top 100 influential women in Silicon Valley in 2011. She also completed the Brookings Institution Certificate in Public Leadership Program in 2012.

When the shocking failures at various VA facilities in the country became public in 2014, there was a beacon of light and excellence at the Palo Alto VA, the institution led by Lisa Freeman. Veterans surveyed about their satisfaction with the Palo Alto VA consistently scored it above the national average and in the top 25 percent in the region for access to outpatient care. This level of excellence is why

Lisa Freeman was called on by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to lead the effort to reform the Southwest VA system in Arizona to correct widespread failures in service to veterans, including hidden wait lists.

During Lisa Freeman's tenure as Director of the Palo Alto VA she has managed 3 inpatient clinics, 7 outpatient clinics, 800 beds including 3 nursing homes and a 100 bed homeless shelter. A Fisher House, a Defenders Lodge and a new Mental Health building were built and dedicated under her leadership, and funds were secured for a second Fisher House to be built on the premises. Lisa Freeman's duties included overseeing one of the most complex health care systems in the country with an annual budget of over \$1 billion, a capital portfolio of \$2.6 billion and more than 7,000 staff and volunteers. She was also responsible for initiating and maintaining a cooperative relationship with the Stanford University School of Medicine, other local health care systems and the neighboring VA Health Care Systems. Lisa was instrumental in the creation of a new rehabilitation facility set to open in late 2016, and the joint VA/DoD facility opening in Monterey in late 2016. She also implemented a system improvement model that utilizes LEAN principles to improve the manner in which the Palo Alto VA cares for its veterans.

Lisa Freeman has served our nation's veterans with extraordinary professionalism and with the care and compassion they've earned and deserve. She is a gifted leader who has led the VA Palo Alto Health Care System with great distinction. I'm very proud to have worked with her and like all those who have had the good fortune to know her, I will miss her wise counsel, her effectiveness and her love for country and those she served.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring Lisa Freeman's great work and in thanking her for her extraordinary service to our nation's veterans.

SABLATURA MIDDLE SCHOOL AD-  
VANCES TO NATIONAL  
SEAPERCH CHALLENGE

**HON. PETE OLSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 23, 2016*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate two Sablatura Middle School teams, Aqua Tronz and Hydro Tech, for advancing to the National SeaPerch Challenge at Louisiana State University.

The U.S. Navy National SeaPerch Challenge is an underwater robotics competition. Both Sablatura teams qualified for nationals by finishing as two of the top seven overall teams at the regional competition. The teams build and operate their own remotely-operated vehicles that function underwater and are designed to complete an obstacle course. The SeaPerch Challenge competition judges the students' underwater vehicles in poster and interview first, and then two underwater challenges follow. The first being an obstacle course and the second being an orbs challenge where the students move different sized balls into submerged containers. The students develop problem-solving, teamwork and technical skills through their work. Both teams are coached by Marc Smith, and we are very

proud of what he and his teams of bright young students have accomplished.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to the two SeaPerch teams, Aqua Tronz and Hydro Tech. Keep up the great work.

TRIBUTE TO WINSTON THOMAS

**HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 23, 2016*

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Winston Thomas, a distinguished public servant in the states of South and North Carolina.

Born August 20, 1942, Winston was a native of Detroit and a graduate of its prestigious Cass Tech High school with a concentration in Electrical Engineering. He came to South Carolina to attend Benedict College in Columbia, graduating with a degree in Chemistry. He was a gifted athlete, attending Benedict on a football scholarship and also competing in basketball, baseball, and track, where he was part of a record-setting 4x200 relay team.

While Winston passed up a professional athletic career when he declined a free agent offer from the Philadelphia Eagles, sports remained his lifelong passion. He participated in three all-state softball teams, was a member of the first all-black team to play in the Columbia Softball League, and competed in the United States Softball Association State Championship. At Benedict, Winston was an athletic institution, working as an assistant basketball coach, helping to start a swim team, and creating an Athletic Hall of Fame (into which he was deservedly inducted).

Even more impressive than Winston's athletic accomplishments was his tenure in public service. His career began as a science teacher and a coach at Booker T. Washington High School. He subsequently served as Director of the Aging Program at the Columbia Urban League and as a Representative for the South Carolina Deferred Compensation Commission. From 1983 to 1988, he served as a Program Information Coordinator on the staffs of two South Carolina governors of different parties. Democrat Richard W. Riley and Republican Carroll A. Campbell. The fact that he was trusted by leaders on both sides of the aisle is a testament to his diligence and public-spiritiveness.

I had the great pleasure of seeing these qualities firsthand in 1988 when he became my Executive Assistant at the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission. Winston played an instrumental role in the Commission's work, and countless South Carolinians benefited from his service there. Though he left the Commission and moved to Charlotte shortly before I left the Commission to serve in Congress, our region continued to benefit from his commitment to public service, with stints at the Urban League of Central Carolina and 100 Black Men of Greater Charlotte, which was selected as chapter of the year three times under his leadership. After leaving 100 Black Men in 2004, Winston started another career as an antique store owner, his store MAMALU, named after his mother, Lula Ballard, was recognized as a North Carolina Treasure.

Winston's love of sports and community leadership was synthesized in the Rudolph Canzater Memorial Classic, an annual golf tournament which we started over 30 years ago and renamed for our mutual friend Rudolph Canzater. That tournament is sponsored by the James E. Clyburn Research and Scholarship Foundation to raise money for college scholarships for students in South Carolina. Thousands of young people are grateful for Winston's generosity, as am I.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues join me in offering condolences to Winston's daughter, Alanna Thomas of Baltimore, his cousins, Wesley Ballard and Angela Dixon of Detroit, and all of the rest of his family and many friends. He will be sorely missed, but he lives on in the countless people whose lives were improved by his selfless service and loyal friendship.

PEARLAND HIGH SCHOOL INDOOR  
DRUMLINE WIN STATE TITLE

**HON. PETE OLSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 23, 2016*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Pearland High School's indoor drumline for winning the state championship.

The Pearland High School Indoor Drumline won the Scholastic Marching A Championship in the Texas Color Guard Circuit Percussion State Championship. Notably, this is the first year since 2005 that Pearland High School has had an indoor drumline. The drumline is directed by Nicholas Guiliano.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to the Pearland High School's Indoor Drumline for winning the state championship in their first year. We look forward to hearing great things from these students and are proud of them for representing Pearland so well.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND  
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RE-  
LATED AGENCIES APPROPRIA-  
TIONS ACT, 2017

SPEECH OF

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 18, 2016*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4974) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes:

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chair, first, I want to thank Chairman DENT and Ranking Member BISHOP for their unwavering leadership of our subcommittee. As the daughter of a veteran, it is truly an honor to be serving in my second year as a member of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee.

The bill before us provides a total of \$81.6 billion in spending—which, thankfully, is \$1.8

billion more than current-year spending levels. Yet, this allocation falls \$1.2 billion short of the President's requested funding level. This gap undermines the promise that we've made to veterans that we would provide them with the best and most innovative care.

This, Mr. Chair, is unnecessary, shameful—and frankly—unacceptable. While there are many provisions which create spending gaps for vital services that our veterans need, I am also pleased to support other provisions.

I support the investments in military infrastructure, housing, and other services to ensure that we give our brave men and women in uniform and their families the proper respect and care they deserve. Additionally, I am pleased that these investments will also help make our military facilities greener and more energy efficient, which is vital to our planet, our national security and the department's bottom line.

I also want to thank the Chair and Ranking Member for the inclusion of report language requiring the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) to provide an updated report on claims processing at the Oakland VA Regional Office (VARO). While the Oakland VA has made significant improvements in Oakland, more work remains to ensure that veterans in my District and throughout the Bay Area are provided with quality care and timely care.

Mr. Chair, I understand the enormous sacrifices made by our service members and their families. And that's why I support language encouraging more coordination between federal agencies to help our veterans' transitioning back to civilian life find jobs. I'm also pleased this bill provides veterans greater access to education, housing and more comprehensive health and mental health services. While these are small steps, they are important ones when approximately one million veterans will be settling into American communities in the next three to five years.

Finally, Mr. Chair, I want to mention that I will join my colleagues in offering an amendment to allow VA doctors to prescribe medical cannabis to their patients in states with state-legal medical cannabis laws. Mr. Chair, the federal government shouldn't be erecting barriers between patients and their medicine. So I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting that effort.

I look forward to continue working with the subcommittee to improve quality of life for our brave service members, veterans and their families. And to work towards addressing funding deficiencies as the process moves forward—our veterans deserve nothing less.

THE PASSING OF HARRY WU

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 23, 2016*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to honor the passing of a deeply committed human rights activist and friend, Mr. Harry Wu. Harry is survived by his son, Harrison, and his former wife, Ching Lee. I offer my sincerest condolences to his family. Harry is also

mourned today by the many friends and colleagues who will remember him as a tireless and determined advocate for freedom and justice.

Harry was born into a comfortable life in Shanghai, but this life was turned upside down when the Communist Party came to power in 1949. His father lost his job and his family's possessions were taken away. In college, Harry made the mistake of criticizing the Soviet Union, and for this mistake he suffered for 19 years in the Laogai—the system of forced labor prison camps used by the Communist Party to control the Chinese people. Harry worked to expose the horrors of the Laogai. Unfortunately, a system of arbitrary detention remains in place in China today, under different names.

During his 19 year detention, Harry endured unimaginable hardship and horror. Surviving such an ordeal is itself a testament to Harry's toughness and tenacity. Harry was driven by this hardship to spend the remainder of his life fighting for the victims of Chinese Communism, exposing its abuses to the world.

After emigrating to the United States, Harry risked his freedom on multiple trips back to China to document forced labor in China's prison camps. In 1995, Harry was caught. I remember that time well, as Ching Lee worked with me and other Members of Congress to call publicly for Harry's release. The Chinese government gave Harry a show trial and then sentenced him to exile. He was never able to go home to China again.

Harry remained undaunted by his exile. He poured his time and energy into his organization, the Laogai Research Foundation, continuing to raise awareness of forced prison labor in China. He published several books about his own ordeal. He published the Black Series, the riveting memoirs of other survivors of the Laogai labor camps. In 2008 he opened the Laogai Museum, documenting human rights abuses in China, both past and present.

Harry was also a passionate voice against China's heinous population control policy—the "One-Child Policy" and helped this Congress expose the abuses of forced abortions and sterilizations. Harry saw clearly that the violence used to control the vital instinct of parenthood was a great crime, and a lasting black mark on Chinese history.

Until his death, Harry continued to be the conscience of this Congress. He constantly reminded Members of Congress about the abuses heaped on the Chinese people by China's leaders and predicted that U.S. trade with China would not bring political reform—sadly history has proven him correct.

As a Catholic, he was a staunch advocate for freedom of religion, and spoke out against the persecution of Tibetan Buddhists and Uyghur Muslims in China.

Harry's work lives on today even if he is no longer here with us. Because of his work, the brutal truth about the Laogai saw the light of day. Because of Harry's commitment to the truth, the stories of survivors were not silenced, but were published for the world to see.

When China eventually becomes a free nation, Harry Wu will be lauded as a hero, because he worked so hard, and so long, for freedom and for justice.